

**Thematic Unit:
Intolerance Can Lead to Persecution and Often Violence**

Literature for Adolescence
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Katie Dysinger
Janette Ferguson
Holly Hunter
Nicholle Tordoff
Nate Rothstein

Knowledge and learning should not be isolated into separate, distinct categories if teachers want to help students make connections across the curriculum. After all, mathematics is applied in science, language arts in math, and music can help teach grammar. Because thematic units group information based on thematic content and not on subject content, they can help students understand the relationship between the subjects. They “should add intellectual depth to the curriculum” in order to “help students learn to apply skills and knowledge across curricular bounds” (Shanahan 16). Some findings of research on thematic units include “vivid connections among the various subject areas,” increased opportunity for differentiation for multiple intelligences, and increased student engagement (Ritter 3). George also observed engagement, as well as active participation, and “deeper appreciation for the literature” in classrooms employing thematic units (80). Ritter passes on a warning from Lipson et al., that the primary discipline, here language arts, must be ““a skeleton on which to attach skills and concepts from other disciplines”” (4). Thus, a language arts teacher incorporates “broad areas of knowledge [...] with the teaching of the four major language skills: reading writing, listening, and speaking” in thematic units (Ritter 1).

Girl of Kosovo, the book our group chose for our thematic unit, communicates one prominent theme – intolerance can lead to persecution and often violence. “Don’t let them fill your heart with hate,” Zana Dugolli’s father counsels when his family faces persecution (13). The book traces Zana’s struggle to understand how the Serbs she knows can show kindness toward her, an ethnic Albanian, while the “majority” seek to drive the Albanians from the country. We will use the book to first introduce some of the

key terms of the unit: tolerance, intolerance, generalization, stereotype, prejudice, and genocide.

Our thematic unit centers on the idea that intolerance can lead to persecution and often violence. This is an important theme to investigate with sixth graders, for whom we wrote the unit, because not only are they future leaders, but students face the effects of intolerance in their own lives. It is not just history of a far away place or time they encounter in their lessons, but something they find on television, in the hallways, and maybe at home. Teachers play an important role in their students' discoveries of their identities. By presenting for discussion real world topics that are relevant to their students, they offer them the chance to grow as individuals and to shape their environment. Given the events that mark newspaper headlines each day, a thematic unit that explores the sources of and brainstorms the cures for intolerance is a strong way to introduce sixth grade students to the contemplation of something they know too well.

We have organized our thematic unit so that the lessons progress from the study of the larger world, the world of the past and of the far away, to the world of the students. We envision the lesson beginning with a journal free write on the students' conceptions of what it means to be tolerant and how it affects their lives. This will be a valuable resource for us as teachers and for the students in assessing their progress at the culmination of the unit. In our lesson plans, we have coupled current world events with the study of the novel *Girl of Kosovo*. By use of a short heuristic response activity and an art activity, we will bridge into a theoretical look at the effects of intolerance in society. We will then bring the unit's core understandings (key terms, etc) to bear on the students'

environment, their school, in an activity in which students poll the student population, analyze the data and brainstorm ways to raise awareness of intolerance in their school.

This thematic unit will include Virginia Standards of Learning in the following content areas: English, Math, Fine Arts, and Computer/Technology (specific SOLs are listed on the “Goals and Essential Elements” page).

After completing this unit, we expect our students to understand and be able to discuss and apply the terms tolerance, intolerance, generalization, stereotype, prejudice, and genocide. We want them to understand how stereotypes can lead to prejudices, prejudices to persecution, persecution to genocide. We want them to be able to draw connections between the racial tensions in pre-war Kosovo to the current racial tensions in post-9/11 United States. We want them to relate Zana’s situation in *Girl of Kosovo* to the situations of children in Iraq. We want them to recognize intolerance in the extreme violence of war and the minor cliques of school. We hope they will examine their environment and identify intolerance and discuss ways to counteract it. We hope to empower students to take charge of their environment.

Works Cited

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GOALS/ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

ENGLISH

- 6.1 The student will analyze oral participation in small-group activities.
 - b) Evaluate own contributions to discussions.
 - c) Summarize and evaluate group activities.
 - d) Analyze the effectiveness of participant interactions.
- 6.2 The student will listen critically and express opinions in oral presentations.
 - a) Distinguish between fact and opinion
 - b) Compare and contrast viewpoints.
 - c) Present a convincing argument.
 - d) Paraphrase what is heard.
 - e) Summarize what is heard.
 - f) Use grammatically correct language and vocabulary appropriate to audience, topic, and purpose.
- 6.6: The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
 - a) Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
 - b) Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
 - c) Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone, and voice.
 - d) Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
 - e) Revise writing for clarity.

MATH

- 6.18 The student, given a problem situation, will collect, analyze, display, and interpret data in a variety of graphical methods, including
 - a) line, bar, and circle graphs

COMPUTER/TECHNOLOGY

- C/T8.1 The student will communicate through application software:
 - Communicate with spreadsheets by entering data and setting up formulas, analyzing data, and creating graphs or charts to visually represent data.

FINE ARTS

- The student will explain orally and in writing, the means by which visual art evokes sensory and emotional responses.
- The student will respond to works of art and analyze responses in terms of cultural and visual meaning.

Book Lesson: *Girl of Kosovo*
By: Nicholle Tordoff
Grade/Age: 6th Grade, age 11-12
Subject: Language Arts/Current Events
Time Frame: 2-3 day Lesson Plan

My Rationale/Objectives:

This lesson plan is a language arts lesson incorporating current events to back up the theme, intolerance can lead to persecution and often violence. To cover the state standards 6.6:

The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.

- a) Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
- b) Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
- c) Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone, and voice.
- d) Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- e) Revise writing for clarity.

The main focus of the plan will look at how students show their feelings through writing and discussion. The writing will focus on the theme and will be an exercise in voice and tone.

The students will read, analyze, discuss and evaluate *Girl of Kosovo*. After discussing *Girl of Kosovo*, the students will have a chance to role play (Process Drama Strategy) selected scenes. This should help them relate to the sense of alienation and helplessness (as talked about in the book). After discussing the book, the students will be asked to look for examples of intolerance and pain and suffering (mostly involving the War in Iraq, but anything current dealing with intolerance and discrimination would be acceptable) in newspapers, magazines, internet articles, etc. The students will discuss what they have found and how they feel about the situation in their findings. This will help the students see that there are many things happening around us today, but we are so removed from it that we often feel we can't communicate or connect with the people involved. This is also a good lesson to teach students the differences between cultures here and overseas (mainly Iraq).

After discussing the current events, the students will be asked to write two letters. This exercise will help the students understand voice and tone. One letter will be addressed to an adult from the *Girl of Kosovo* and the other letter will be addressed to an Iraqi child/student of the same age. The voice and tone should be different in both letters, but the theme will be the same.

Focus/Review:

To open the lesson I will introduce historical times where intolerance was a problem, and then tie it into the *Girl of Kosovo* and what is happening in Iraq and around the world today. The students will be given the *QUESTIONS* handout to focus their reading and conversations about the book.

Student Objectives:

- Students will read, analyze, and discuss Alice Meade’s *Girl of Kosovo*
- Students will role play (Process Drama Strategy) several scenes from the book involving the theme of intolerance and discrimination/pain and suffering
- Students will compare current events of today dealing with intolerance and discrimination—final discussion will involve the War in Iraq
- Students will write 2 letters—one letter to a character in the book and a second letter to an Iraqi child of today.
- Students will revise and rewrite letters for final draft.

Teacher Input:

In this lesson students will learn that intolerance is bad and it can lead to discrimination, pain and suffering, as well as hatred. *Girl of Kosovo* deals with this theme. As a class we will discuss the affects of this theme in the book as well as the events occurring today in Iraq—and other places around the world. A list of questions *QUESTIONS* will focus the discussion. We will then discuss and analyze how to deal with such intolerances by role playing. We will use the Process Drama Strategy with some scenes from *Girl of Kosovo* so the students can feel what it would be like to be in that position. By doing the Process Drama we will acknowledge the human conflicts in the literature and tie them into the current events by discussing the realities of human life. Students will discuss in small groups, and will share with the whole class how they felt during the Process Drama strategy.

Then as a class we will discuss how to deal with the theme of intolerance by writing a letter to the Zana in the *Girl of Kosovo*. I will model the letter on an overhead by taking suggestions from the class as to what we would want to say to her. Here we will discuss theme, voice, and tone and how they would differ depending on the audience. Then the students will write their own letters addressing two different people, but using the same theme.

Guided Practice:

- Students will be discussing *Girl of Kosovo* in small groups and then will discuss as a whole class what they thought to be significant about the book
- We will also discuss the difference in voice and tone in connection with the book. How would the book be different if it were written by one of the other characters?
- As a class we will discuss the theme intolerance can lead to persecution and often violence—war. (*QUESTIONS for focus*)
- While talking about *Girl of Kosovo* we will incorporate current events going on around the world that deals with the theme of intolerance. (Students will bring in newspaper, magazine, internet, etc., articles for this discussion.)
- We will act out some of the scenes in *Girl of Kosovo* (Process Drama Strategy) to allow students to problem solve in response to the human conflict in the book.
- These strategies will tie the theme together for the independent practice
- I will then model the letter writing assignment on the overhead/chalkboard using Zana—girl of Kosovo as a model.

Independent Practice:

- Students will complete *QUESTIONS* handout in groups of 4.
- Students will partake in role playing scenes from book (Process Drama.)
- Students will write 2 letters using the intolerance theme.
- One letter will be addressed to an adult in *Girl of Kosovo*
- One letter will be addressed to a child/student of today in Iraq
- The letters will incorporate writer's voice and tone separately in each letter
- Students will read letters in groups of twos.
- The letters will be revised and rewritten before turning in a final draft.

Evaluation and Assessment:

- Was handout completed by the groups?
- Did students actively take part in the role playing?
- Did students work together with revision process?

Rubric: 2 Letter Assignment Using Theme (10pts)

- Audience (6pts total)
 - Adult Letter (3pts) ___
 - Iraqi Student (3pts) ___
- Analysis of Assignment (1pt) ___
- Relevant topic using theme (2pts) ___
- Organization and Clarity (1pt) ___
- Grammar/Spelling (1pt) ___

Closure:

Activity will be turned in. After grading the students will display their letters in the classroom. We will continue reading current events, so the students will be able to keep up with what's going on around them. They will feel like they are more in tune to the world. We will discuss their findings throughout the year. (a possible pen-pal project—look into it. <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~penpals/> <http://www.wcf.org/penfriends/main.html> ---websites for international pen-pals) Might send letters to actual Iraqi students.

Materials Needed:

- Book: *Girl of Kosovo*
- Journals
- Pen/pencil
- Paper
- Computers (if available)
- Stage for Process Drama—use theatre stage maybe—for a new perspective!

Technology: Use of computers for research of articles for intolerance theme. Students may write letters on computers. Videos on Children of War can be used to illustrate the theme.

Plans for Individual Differences:

I don't see that this lesson would need to be modified too much for individual learners of different strengths and attitudes. It is more about humanity and what is going on in the world today compared to the literature we are reading in the sixth grade classroom. Perhaps the advanced learner could do more research on current events and come up with questions for the class. Maybe the delayed learner could also come up with one question for the class to discuss, so as to be included with the regular pace. The inattentive learner could be one of the main actors in the Process Drama skits so he/she has something to actually *do*. The unprepared learner could be the class note-taker that way he/she is still involved and can see what's been going on so he/she can catch up. The hostile learner would take on a different role in the Process Drama skits—a role that would demand a change of perspective. He/she might be Zana and her family, or Lena and her family at the end. Hostile learners are very delicate. Altering lessons to individual learners depends on the individual. I'd have to assess my class at this point to see where I might need to modify the lesson. It is hard to do it without actual students!

QUESTIONS for Focus and Discussion of *Girl of Kosovo*

1. What symbols of war are recognizable to everyone? Why is this so?
2. How are children and their communities affected by war? In what ways does it interfere with daily activities? What are the long-term effects?
3. How can children's rights be protected in times of war?
4. Select one of the children and describe what you think life was like for him or her during the war. What sacrifices did these children make?
5. Why do politicians enter war without realizing the effects it has on those who are not trained soldiers?
6. What effects do wars have on families?
7. Choose two of the children and compare and contrast their experiences.
8. What would you say if you could write to one of these children?

Holly Hunter
Thematic Unit: Tolerance

Teaching About Tolerance Through Multi- Media

Subject: Fine Arts

Standards Of Learning:

- The student will explain orally and in writing, the means by which visual art evokes sensory and emotional responses.
- The student will respond to works of art and analyze responses in terms of cultural and visual meaning.

Objectives:

- The students will gain a better understanding of the meaning of tolerance.
- The students will be able to express or represent a feeling or value in a collage using the theme of tolerance.

Materials Needed:

- CD player
- Peter, Paul, and Mary song, "Don't Laugh at Me"
- Paper, pencils
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Construction Paper/ Poster Paper

Time Frame:

- One – two class periods

Focus:

I will begin the lesson using a heuristic strategy to get the students involved. Using this strategy the students will first listen to a song called "Don't Laugh at Me". While listening to the words of the song the students will be instructed to write down any thoughts, feelings, emotions, or ideas the song might evoke. As a class, we will then

discuss each student's response to the song. The group discussion should then lead to a discussion on tolerance. We will then discuss the importance of tolerance and what being tolerant means. We will also discuss how being intolerant of others different than us might make them feel. (This activity is meant to introduce the theme of our lesson.)

Teacher Input:

At the beginning of class I will explain to the students the goal of the heuristic activity. I will explain that we will be listening to a song. Then I will further explain that while we are listening to the song they will need to write down any thoughts about the song, what they think the meaning of the song might be, and feelings or emotions they felt from listening to the words of the song. I will then explain to them that after we have completed this activity we will share with the class what we each wrote down. Our discussion should then lead to our theme, tolerance. Once we have introduced the word tolerance we will discuss what it means to be tolerant and how we can show tolerance to others. Once the class has a clear understanding I will give them their collage assignment. I will begin this assignment by showing them a collage that I have already made. I will ask the students what feelings or emotions my collage shows. I will then explain that I want their collages to represent tolerance. I want them to choose certain pictures and words and ideas that are going to make whomever looks at their collage feel a certain way and understand what they are trying to say. When they have finished their collage the students will write on a separate sheet of paper what their collage means to them or what it represents. They will then glue their write up on the back of their collage. The purpose of the collage is to be able to express a value, emotion, or theme through visual art.

Guided Practice:

During guided practice the students will begin making their individual collages. They will begin by deciding what they want their collage to portray; what feelings or thoughts they want their collage to represent. They will then begin collecting a variety of pictures, images, and words from magazines. I will be walking around the room observing and giving help where it is needed.

Independent Practice:

The students will show an accomplishment of the objective by making a collage that represents a feeling or value of tolerance.

Closure:

The lesson ends with the students sharing their collages with the class. The class will then put in their input as to what they think each student's picture represents. The students will then share with the class the meaning of their collage.

Evaluation and Assessment:

I will evaluate this activity through observing the students while they make their collage. I will then do a final evaluation after the completion of the assignment. The specifics that I will be looking for are as follows:

- Does their collage represent an emotion, feeling or value of tolerance?
- Is there something significant connecting all the pictures they have chosen (I will make sure the pictures are not random pictures thrown together, they need to represent the same kind of theme)?
- Does their write- up correspond to the actual collage and the meaning of their collage?

TOLERANCE – HOW DOES YOUR SCHOOL RATE?

RATIONALE:

This is the culminating lesson of our thematic unit on intolerance. This lesson will help students examine the social climate of their school based on data from a survey. Having investigated some of the intolerances in the world that are physically and chronologically far-removed from the students' lives, this lesson will bring the implications of intolerance into their everyday lives, albeit on a smaller scale than warfare, for example.

English

- 6.1 The student will analyze oral participation in small-group activities.
 - b) Evaluate own contributions to discussions.
 - c) Summarize and evaluate group activities.
 - d) Analyze the effectiveness of participant interactions.
- 6.2 The student will listen critically and express opinions in oral presentations.
 - a) Distinguish between fact and opinion
 - b) Compare and contrast viewpoints.
 - c) Present a convincing argument.
 - d) Paraphrase what is heard.
 - e) Summarize what is heard.
 - f) Use grammatically correct language and vocabulary appropriate to audience, topic, and purpose.
- 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
 - b) Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
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Math

- 6.18 The student, given a problem situation, will collect, analyze, display, and interpret data in a variety of graphical methods, including
 - b) line, bar, and circle graphs

Computer/Technology

- C/T8.1 The student will communicate through application software:
 - Communicate with spreadsheets by entering data and setting up formulas, analyzing data, and creating graphs or charts to visually represent data.

OBJECTIVE:

- Students will survey the student population on the presence of intolerance in their school.
- Students will collect data from this survey and generate a visual representation of their statistical population (by grade, by gender, by race/ethnicity).
- Students will brainstorm ideas to raise awareness of their school's social barriers and how to counteract intolerance in their school.

- Students will produce an essay in which they reflect on their findings and their reactions.

FOCUS/REVIEW:

- Read Dr. Seuss's *The Sneetches* and discuss
- Discuss key terms of unit (intolerance, prejudice, stereotype, social group, climate, environment)
- Students in the class take the survey to provide data for teacher modeling.
- Discuss: How did they feel while taking the survey? Do they think the survey accurately assesses the social climate of a school? Should anything be added? Removed? Changed?

OBJECTIVE (STUDENT):

As we have seen in this unit, in the history of the world there has been much warfare, violence, persecution, prejudice, intolerance, and stereotypes in every area of the globe. We have focused on the past, the near past, and other parts of the world and country. Now we are going to use our investigator eyes to look at a very important part of the world and your environment – this school.

For this activity, you will become researchers, statisticians, activists, and essayists.

TEACHER INPUT:

- Students will take the survey.
- I will use the data generated to model the process of analysis.
- I will show them how data can be grouped by different categories.
- I will do a minilesson on spreadsheets to show how to enter their data and how to create charts and graphs.
- I will show examples of graphs, charts, and artistic representations of data to show the broad range of options.
- I will show examples of “activist” products (posters, public service announcements for the P.A. or school newspaper, etc) to show expectations for the final product.
- I will answer any questions.

GUIDED PRACTICE:

- As a class, we will sort the data from the collected survey and discuss how the data could be compared.
- Students will be divided into three self-selected groups (based on interests), each responsible for a particular comparison group (grade, gender, race/ethnicity, “social group identification,” or maybe a particular answer to a particular question).

- Each group will brainstorm a list of possible ways they could approach the data for analysis and visual representation (based on teacher input and modeling strategies).
- Within the larger groups, students will be broken down into smaller self-selected groups of 2-4 people and the brainstorm list (from above) will be divided among these smaller groups.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE:

- Each student will be responsible for daily freewrite or prompt-response journaling on the activity, group process, their learning, questions they hope to answer
- The small groups will choose how they would like to approach their chosen population and then begin to analyze the data.
- The students will display their findings through a visual medium (graphs, charts, symbolic artwork)
- The groups will present their findings and interpretations to classmates for questions and discussion in a “What does it all mean?” forum.
- Students will write a 1½-2 page reflective essay on the entire lesson.

CLOSURE:

With each act of persecution and intolerance, small or large, there is an opportunity to set the world right. How can we help to set our school on a more tolerant path? How can we share what we have learned with the rest of the school?

- Students break into new 4-5 person groups to develop some kind of awareness campaign for their school (poster, public service announcement over P.A., editorial in school paper).
- Students will assess their learning and participation using the evaluation rubric.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:

Students are responsible for:

- Daily journaling (free writing and from prompts) on activities, discussions, your participation, your learning
- Thoughtful discussion participation
- Data collection and interpretation
 - Group work/responsibilities
 - Use of spreadsheet applications
 - Correct use of data
 - Visual representation of data
 - clear, not misleading, creative
- Essay
- Awareness campaign

RUBRICS:

Rubric: Journaling and Discussion (up to 10 pts)

	1	2	3	4	5
Journaling	Little thoughtful response and questions, no evaluation		Summarize, respond to discussion,		Consistent thoughtful responses and questions, evaluation of self, group, and activity
Discussion	Little preparation, little participation, no questions		Preparation, appropriate participation, clarifying questions	Preparation, appropriate participation, at least one question	Preparation; active, appropriate participation, asks thoughtful questions

Rubric: Data Collection and Interpretation (up to 50 pts)

Group work/responsibilities	Fulfill responsibilities as group member, participate and communicate effectively with others	10
Spreadsheet use	Correctly set up spreadsheet, Correctly input data, experiment with different graphing and chart applications in program to best represent data	10
Appropriate and useful application of data	Did you choose a way to analyze the data that shows us an important trend in the school? Did you apply the data in a truthful way?	20
Visual representation	Appropriate, creativity helps, neat, clear, organized	10

Rubric: Essay (up to 60 pts)

Do you have a central idea or theme?	10
Is your essay well organized?	10
Did you explain or support your statements?	10
Does it make sense as a whole?	15
Do you incorporate key terms and ideas you have learned in the thematic unit?	10
Did you carefully check your spelling and grammar?	5

Rubric: Awareness Campaign

Is it neat?	5
Is it thoughtful?	10
Does it convey what you have learned?	15

MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY:

- spreadsheet software
- access to and familiarity with computers
- art materials, construction paper, markers, crayons, scissors, glue, tape, etc

- paper
- student journals
- writing instruments
-

PLANS FOR DIFFERENTIATION:

Although this plan for differentiation is not based on varying learning abilities or multiple intelligences, one concern that deals primarily with the class taking the survey for the teacher to model strategies and skills is the ethnic/racial/gender diversity of the classroom. In classrooms with very little diversity (either no diversity or so little that the data could reveal identity) the teacher should randomly assign a made-up category to substitute. For example, instead of using race, students could be randomly assigned a secret color like purple or blue as they enter the classroom and statistical data could be generated based on that.

Students with learning disabilities would be in supportive groups that would allow them to work within their abilities and assist in areas in which they need extra help. All products for assessment can be modified for individual objectives as needed.

Students who need extra challenges could assist others in the area of their strengths (computers, math, art, etc).

Adapted from lesson plan at Education World at http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/03/lp294-02.shtml

How tolerant is your school?

Survey from <http://tolerance.org/teens/survey.jsp>

Mix It Up is a national campaign to identify, question and cross group boundaries in our daily lives. What are the social boundaries in your school? Your opinion matters. Let your voice be heard; take just 2 minutes to complete this survey.

1. Which best describes your school?

- welcoming to all kinds of people
- quick to put people in categories

2. In what settings have you noticed people grouping themselves and others by categories?

- after-school clubs
- assemblies
- bus
- cafeteria
- classroom
- recreational activities
- spectator events
- other _____

3. Which of the following categories create group boundaries at you school?

- academic achievement
- athletic achievement
- beliefs
- ethnicity
- family income
- gender
- hobbies

- home neighborhood
- language
- musical interests
- personal appearance
- race
- sexual orientation
- style
- other _____

4. Which of those group boundaries are the hardest to cross, and why?

5. At your school, how easy is it to make friends with people in different groups?

- very easy
- kind of easy
- kind of hard
- very hard

6. Have you ever felt unwelcome or rejected by others on the basis of any of the categories listed in Question 3?

- yes
- no

If so, which ones, and how?

7. Have you ever been part of a group that rejected someone on the basis of any of these categories?

yes

no

If so, which ones, and how?

8. What would you be willing to do to encourage more interaction across group boundaries?

introduce myself to someone new

sit with someone different at lunch

help my school participate in Mix It Up at Lunch Day on November 21st

choose someone I don't know for my pick-up team

dance with someone from another group

invite "outsiders" to a party with my friends

join a club of others who want to "Mix It Up"

other _____

9. Of the people you know, who would be most likely to listen to and support your attempt to cross group lines?

a coach

a counselor

a friend

a parent

a religious leader

a teacher

other _____

Why did you choose this person?